CITY OF TORONTO
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Waterfront &
Urban Design
March 2, 1983

To: Land Use Committee

Subject: Part II Plan for the Railway Lands: Progress Report III

Origin: Commissioner of Planning and Development (c71luc83052:114)

Comments:

1. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

This report, which responds to a request from City Council at its meeting of January 10, 1983, that I provide the Land Use Committee with an update on the preparation of a Part II Plan for the Railway Lands, is the third progress report on the Part II Plan to date.

The first progress report, which was received by the Land Use Committee at its meeting of June 14, 1982, dealt in a general way with the five main components of the Part II Study Program - Access, Development Prospects, Parks and Open Space, Railway Heritage, and Servicing and Infrastructure.

The second progress report, which was before the Land Use Committee at its meeting of October 4, 1982, but was deferred sine die, addressed the emerging pattern of streets and blocks in the context of urban design objectives outlined in the Railway Lands "Goals and Objectives" report. Attached to this second progress report was a preliminary road and block plan.

In addition to reviewing the work presently underway in each of the five Part II study areas, including a revised road and block plan, this third progress report recommends that departmental staff, in consultation with Marathon, CN Realty, other landowners in the Railway Lands and other City officials, prepare and submit to Council a "Part II Development Concept" document for the railway lands.

Such a "Part II Development Concept" would synthesize the conclusions reached in each of the five interrelated Part II study areas, and, once endorsed by Council, would provide a clear and agreed upon basis for the more detailed and technically specific Part II Plan, Zoning By-law and other implementing legal agreements. This approach appears to me to be the most understandable method of describing the future development of this

large area, and an essential and integral part of the Part II Plan process.

2. REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN STUDY AREAS

2.1 Access

Work on the Access Study has from the outset focussed on the production of a satisfactory road and block plan which would provide the major structuring element for the development of the railway lands.

The preliminary road plan included in the second progress report, which, as previously noted, was deferred sine die, was developed to help implement the longstanding City objective of integrating the railway lands and the Central Waterfront into the existing City street pattern. In this context, the preliminary road plan included the extension into the railway lands of two north-south streets, Portland and Simcoe, which strengthened the existing north-south links to the waterfront at Bathurst, Spadina, York, Bay and Yonge, and provided additional access to the railway lands. As well, additional points of access were identified at Peter Street to the north and Rees Street to the south. The preliminary plan also showed a major east-west spine road which provided an internal link between Bay Street and Bathurst Street.

Following the development of this preliminary road plan, attention has been focussed on the integration of the internal roads with the surrounding arterial system, with particular emphasis on connections to the Gardiner Expressway and Lakeshore Boulevard West. This work has been supplemented by consultant studies of specific access proposals undertaken for the City, CN Realty and other waterfront land owners. Among the proposals presented in these studies is the westerly extension of Front Street to Strachan Avenue, with ramps linking this extension to the Gardiner Expressway. At present, discussions respecting these proposals are underway with both the City Public Works Department and with the relevant Metro officials, and I intend to report to Council more fully on these proposals once they have been assessed.

The main impact of the analyses included in these studies is to suggest that the extremely heavy flows which presently exist on Spadina Avenue and York Street south of Front Street can be more effectively spread over the road network by modifying the ramps to and from the Gardiner Expressway or by a reconfiguration of existing ramps. In the light of a preliminary investigation of this redistribution, at grade intersections of the east-west spine road with York Street and Spadina Avenue now appear to be possible, and such at grade intersections have been incorporated into the proposed Road and Transit Network shown on the attached

map. This revised plan also shows the east-west spine road as a more direct route through the railway lands than was shown in the second progress report.

This revised approach, which reflects considerations related to both existing grade conditions and site planning concerns, strengthens existing and proposed north-south links to the railway lands, and permits the establishment of a strong building-street relationship on both the east-west spine and the connecting north-south streets. In addition, the proposed elimination of a grade-separated intersection at York Street and the major east-west spine road reduces the amount of required road construction for access purposes. In my opinion, it also facilitates the integration of new railway lands development into existing and proposed developments in the Central Waterfront, which are grade related. This revised approach and its implications are currently being reviewed with the City Department of Public Works, Metro officials, CN, Marathon Realty, and Public Works Canada.

Since the second progress report, the additional work on the road plan has been supplemented by the development of a proposed transit network. The simplified grade-related road pattern and the more direct east-west spine road have enhanced the surface route options for transit services along the principal roads. Details relating to the nature and capacity of possible transit services will be presented at a later date. However, both the east-west spine and Spadina Avenue have been proposed to have sufficient width to allow for exclusive transit rights-of-way. The LRT route on Spadina Avenue has been discussed in earlier reports, but an exclusive right-of-way for an LRT on Bay Street is now also under examination, as was reported in my ARTS Final Report, dated January 20, 1983.

In the event that an intermediate capacity transit service operating on an exclusive right-of-way (ICTS) is selected to serve the Waterfront area, I have indicated on the attached map, one possible alignment, based on a preliminary analysis by the City Planning and Development Department. This alignment utilizes a portion of the existing high line embankment and reduces possible conflicts between an elevated transit system and grade-related buildings. In addition, it is my opinion that the option shown serves Harbourfront and the Railway Lands west of John Street in a more efficient and effective manner. Beyond Spadina Avenue, the routing of any elevated ICTS would depend on the desired access to the CNE grounds and the constraints imposed by the planned residential development of Bathurst Quay in Harbourfront. However, I am not convinced at this time that an ICTS system is either necessary or the most appropriate transit technology. As suggested above, suitable surface transit options are available

which could, in this department's preliminary analysis, adequately serve transit demand.

The present proposed road and transit network, shown on the attached map, has evolved out of departmental staff analysis and discussions with the City Public Works Department, CN and Marathon Realty and their consultants. The full evaluation of the plan by all the agencies involved and more detailed traffic capacity and related operational analysis of the road pattern are being carried out in conjunction with the assessment of the possible improvements to the Gardiner Expressway ramps referred to above. The question of the capacity of the regional road system, and the implied capacity requirements of commercial development in the railway lands as part of the Central Area will be dealt with in a later study.

2.2 Development Prospects

2.2.1 Development Prospects Study Approach

To date work on the Development Prospects study has proceeded primarily in the context of work on a road and block plan, which will provide the major structuring element for new railway lands development, and will be an essential component of the Part II Plan. In particular, the evolution of the proposed road plan shown on the attached map has been influenced by the need to create feasible development parcels.

Using the current road and block plan as a framework, greater attention can now be focussed on the primary objectives of the Development Prospects study, which are the determination of an appropriate distribution of uses, density and building mass across the railway lands, and the articulation of site planning and urban design principles to guide the realization of this development potential.

The approach being followed at present is to identify preliminary development scenarios for the different areas of the railway lands in the context of existing policies set out in the City's Part I Official Plan and the objectives included in the 1978 "Goals and Objectives" report. The development of these scenarios will continue to be influenced by a number of factors, including:

(i) the need to establish appropriate relationships with adjacent areas of the City, including the Central Waterfront;

(ii) the constraints imposed on the location of uses by the presence of major road and rail corridors;

(iii) the need to establish a strong building-street relationship and desirable ground level conditions; and

(iv) the capacity of the regional transportation system.

It would be premature at this time to attempt to assign specific uses and densities to individual development sites. In addition, because of the variety of objectives identified for the area east of John Street, it is not yet possible to put forward a single land use scenario for this area. However, the following general comments should indicate the general direction being followed at present.

2.2.2 Area east of John Street

Lands included in this area are owned or primarily controlled or owned by Marathon Realty, Canada Post (Public Works Canada), the Toronto Terminal Railways, CN (The Convention Centre and the CN Tower) and the City of Toronto. The Part I Official Plan is quite specific in terms of maximum office density and minimum housing requirements for this area. However, it does not directly address either the specific locations of these uses, or the nature of other uses.

At present preliminary massing and built form studies are being undertaken to determine how to most appropriately distribute the density allocated to this area by the Part I Plan, while at the same time permitting the creation of a major park west of Simcoe Street and the possible retention of the CP Roundhouse. The major focus of work in this area, however, has been on the appropriate relationship of new development to grade.

Although changes in grade occur throughout the railway lands, the site-planning difficulties resulting from these changes appear to be most pronounced in the area east of Simcoe, where the elevations of existing and proposed north-south streets vary by approximately 5.5 metres (18 feet) from the existing grade in both the Financial District to the north of Front Street and in the portion of the railway lands east of John Street, and where major access routes to the Gardiner-Lakeshore corridor constrain the functioning of intersections. The question of how best to deal with these difficulties has focussed on the question of whether or not the intersection of the east-west spine road with York Street should be at grade or grade-separated. As discussed in Section 2.1 above, this department's current position is that this intersection should be at grade. This approach is now being examined from a functional point of view by the City Public Works Department, and is under consideration by Marathon. Marathon's present position is that the intersection should be grade separated.

2.2.3 Area west of John Street south of the rail corridor, including Spadina Avenue frontages

This area is primarily controlled by CN Realty, with leases in effect for CN's Via Rail operation. In addition, the area includes the John Street Water Pumping facility owned and operated by Metropolitan Toronto.

Neither the Part I Official Plan nor the "Goals and Objectives" report sets out very specific policies with respect to uses and densities for this area. Therefore, work in this area has concentrated on the identification of development parcels in the context of the road and block plan, on a general distribution of uses, and on massing and built-form studies undertaken in the context of the general principles outlined in Section 2.2.1 above.

The preliminary land use concept for this area recognizes a secondary commercial sub-centre, with residential options, focussed on Spadina Avenue. This secondary commercial sub-centre should be based on a strong building-street relationship that produces a pedestrian oriented atmosphere along Spadina Avenue. Given the nature of uses contemplated both east and west of this centre, as well as the relationship with surrounding planning areas, including Harbourfront to the south, this Spadina secondary sub-centre will be of a lower magnitude than the commercial development in the Financial District. To the east of this secondary commercial sub-centre, preliminary land use studies suggest a mixed commercial residential area, extending to the John Street Pumping Station and including the CN Roundhouse.

In determining specific planning objectives for the area east of the Spadina Avenue frontage, our studies have emphasized the retention and strengthening of the open space generated by the form of the CN Roundhouse, and the desirability of preserving certain elements of the roundhouse structure and integrating these into future new development. We are also emphasizing strong pedestrian links in this area to the CN Tower Park and along the high line embankment, which should be retained. In addition, we are stressing the necessity of establishing a strong and coherent relationship between commercial development on the frontages of Spadina Avenue, the uses located on the major east-west spine road, and the more unusual spatial pattern of the CN Roundhouse.

The John Street Pumping Station will remain in its present location. However the possibility may exist to develop the Metro-owned lands adjacent to the Pumping Station south of the east-west spine road.

.2.4 Area west of the Spadina sub-centre

At present this area is considered appropriate for predominantly residential development including a substantial amount of family housing. The density and scale of this development would be comparable to existing development in St. Lawrence and that proposed for Bathurst Quay in Harbourfront. Departmental staff are currently undertaking massing and built-form studies in this area to ascertain the appropriate mix of housing types, appropriate locations for local retail and service uses, and the scale of buildings necessary to minimize the impact of noise and vibration caused by the Lakeshore/Gardiner transportation corridor and the main rail corridor to the north. In addition, a major open space extension of Old Fort York is proposed east of Bathurst Street. The precise locations of community park space, as discussed in Section 2.3 below, have not been identified at present.

2.2.5 Special Study Area and Area north of the main rail corridor east of Spadina Avenue

The presence of the GO Transit idling yards and the main rail corridor between Spadina Avenue and Bathurst Street immediately south of Front Street, make it difficult to recommend a land use concept for this area at this time. My staff will be addressing this issue with CN Realty and will report on this matter at a later time. I would, however, point out that as Front Street increases in importance as a major arterial providing access to and from the downtown, the development of this portion of the railway lands must be resolved satisfactorily.

The parcel at the south-east corner of Spadina Avenue and Front Street, including the possible bridging or decking over of the main rail corridor, has a direct relationship to the existing Royal Bank Computer Centre and the King-Spadina Industrial Area to the north. In this context, preliminary land use studies suggest a mixed commercial/industrial designation for this area. However, this approach will be reviewed in relation to the findings of studies of the area north of Front Street.

2.3 Parks and Open Space

At this stage it is not necessary to attempt to specify the exact physical limits of an entire railway lands park system. However, major elements of such a park system have been identified, and these can be categorized as either critical or flexible elements.

Critical elements are defined as essential components of the open space system whose function and general location can be described at this time. An example of this type of space is the proposed

major public park to be located west of Simcoe Street. A major open space east of Bathurst Street which will function as an extension of Fort York, the circular open space defined by the CN Roundhouse, the John Street pedestrian corridor linking Harbourfront to the City core, Union Plaza and the extensive landscaping of the east-west spine are other critical elements.

There are other elements of the parks and open space concept which are as essential as the ones described above but whose location is less critical at this time. An example of this type of flexible park element would be a community level park in the proposed residential area west of Spadina, extending to Bathurst Street. Although it is important that a major community park be provided in this predominantly residential area, there are several sites on which such a park could be developed.

Two other elements that fall into the category of flexible elements are open space corridors along the north and south edges of the Railway Lands. While it is generally clear where such corridors should occur, flexibility is required in order to respond to ongoing refinements to the road plan and development parcels.

The emerging open space concept will continue to be refined, and recreation and programming ideas are currently being studied with the objective of preparing a thorough discussion of the specific facilities which people living and working in the area will require.

2.4 Railway Heritage

As discussed in the first progress report on the railway lands, an important objective for new development is the retention, renovation and imaginative reuse of existing railway structures, where this is found to be appropriate. Particular attention has been given in our planning exercise to the possible retention of the CP and RN Roundhouses and to possible uses of related landforms such as the highline embankment.

A consultant study is presently underway which includes the preparation of a detailed inventory of heritage railway properties in the railway lands. This study will include background material on the age of the steam locomotive in the railway lands and the growth of the railways on Toronto's waterfront, as well as a formal inventory of existing buildings and landforms.

At its meeting of January 10, 1983, City Council approved a recommendation requesting the Mayor to report on the terms of reference, funding, timing and chairmanship of a second, or Phase II study which will address the feasibility of preserving historic

properties owned by Canadian Pacific as identified in the Railway Heritage study now underway.

2.5 Servicing and Infrastructure

This department's work on servicing and infrastructure, including the principles for apportioning costs and responsibilities for phasing and construction, will become more prominent as issues related to the other study areas, particularly Access and Development Prospects, are more clearly resolved. These matters will be addressed in the proposed Part II Development Concept discussed below.

3. PROPOSAL FOR A "PART II DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT" DOCUMENT

As consistently emphasized in background work to date on the railway lands, and as illustrated in the preceding discussion of the five study areas, the preparation of the Part II Plan requires an integrated approach to a wide variety of interdependent topics. As work has advanced on these topics, it has become apparent that there would be considerable benefit in drawing these separate, inter-related elements together into a single comprehensive concept document which would illustrate the nature of the proposed development of the railway lands. It is my belief that such a concept plan would be much more informative and understandable than the traditional detailed Part II Plan statements and complex zoning by-laws and other legal agreements, and therefore would facilitate agreement on a vision of how the railway lands should be developed.

I am therefore undertaking the preparation, in consultation with CN and Marathon Realty, other levels of government and other landowners in the Railway Lands, of a "Part II Development Concept" document which would draw together in clearly illustrated form a proposed City position on the nature and form of development of the Part II study area. This proposed "Part II Development Concept" would place the development of the Railway Lands in the context of the Part I Official Plan, the "Goals and Objectives" report, objectives for surrounding planning districts and broader City and Metropolitan interests. The "Part II Development Concept" would include, in textual and graphic form, the following elements:

(i) an overall physical framework of streets, blocks, open spaces and transit rights-of-way, as well as the rationale for this structuring physical framework, including an explanation of how the proposed internal road and transit systems are to be integrated into the wider regional road and transit network;

(ii) a proposed distribution of uses, densities and building mass across the railway lands and the planning rationale for this distribution, based on an analysis of land use concepts, on built-form and massing studies, and on the implications of such development on the regional transportation system; and

(iii) site planning and general urban design principles to guide the development of the Railway Lands.

The "Part II Development Concept" should also address the legal and procedural framework necessary to implement the development of the railway lands, including the Part II Plan, Zoning By-law, and the related legal agreements required to secure development control, to allocate responsibilities for the provision of infrastructure and servicing and to establish a procedure for the phasing of construction.

If this recommendation is approved, I would estimate that, given the co-operation of all parties concerned, such a "Part II Development Concept" could be completed within the next few months. Once endorsed by City Council, the "Concept" would provide a clear and concrete basis for the drafting of Part II Plan statements and the necessary implementing Zoning By-law amendments and related legal agreements.

4. CONCLUSION

This report, which is the third progress report to date on the Railway Lands Part II Plan, reviews for the information of Council the work currently underway in each of the five Part II Study areas - Access, Development Prospects, Parks and Open Space, Railway Heritage and Servicing and Infrastructure. It includes a revised road and block plan as well as a preliminary land use concept which will be refined as more detailed studies occur. This report recommends that I be requested to produce a "Part II Plan Development Concept" for the railway lands as an integral component of the Part II process. This proposed "concept" would synthesize, in textual and graphic form, the conclusions reached in each of the five Part II study areas, and would provide a basis for Part II Official Plan statements, zoning provisions and other necessary legal agreements. If this approached is endorsed, and with the co-operation of the actors involved, a "Part II Plan Development Concept" could likely be completed within the next few months. If the vision of railway lands development put forward in the proposed "Part II Plan Development Concept" meets with Council approval, I would assume that a proposed Part II Plan, Zoning By-law and other agreements could be brought forward expeditiously.

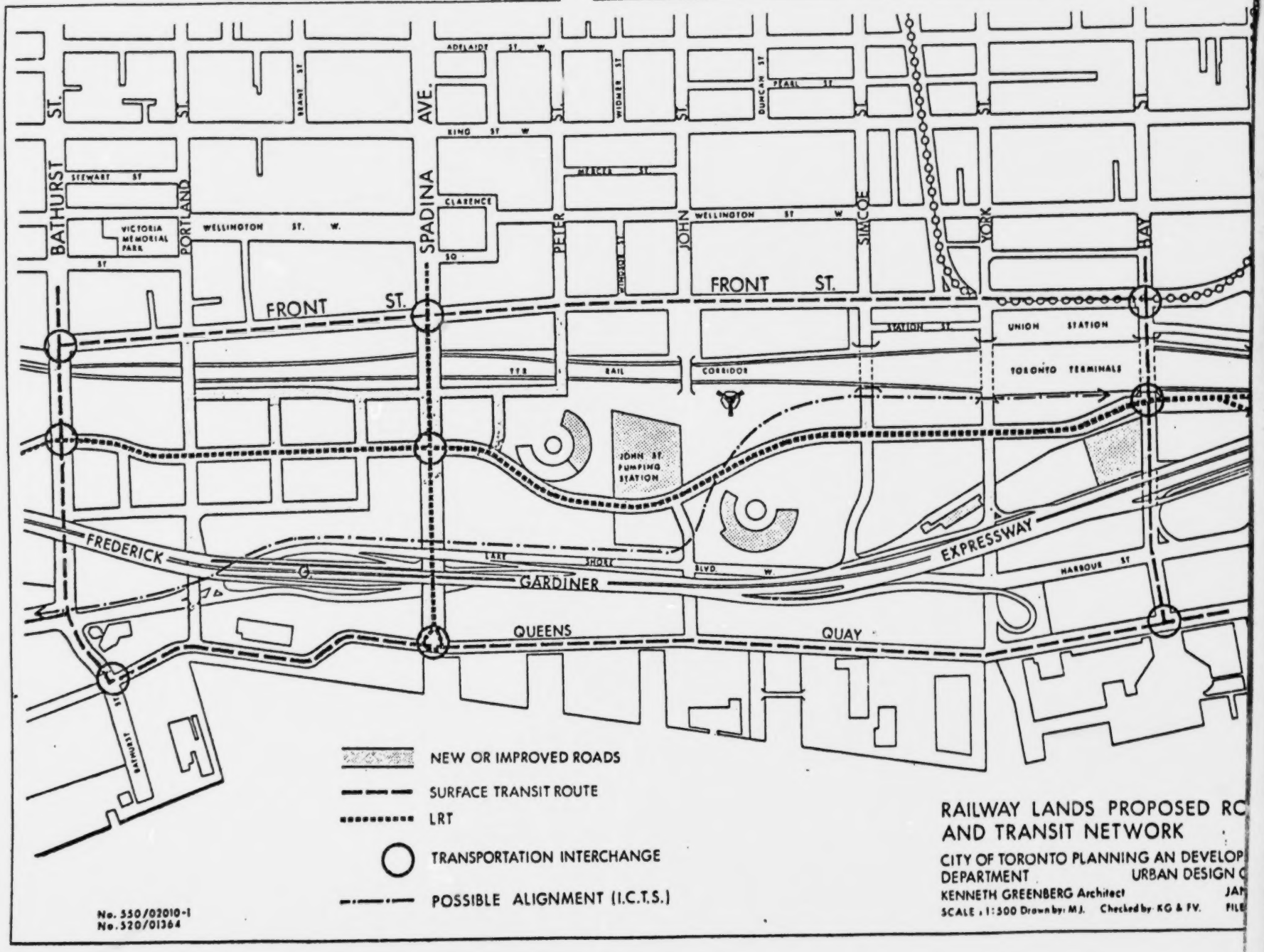
Land Use Committee

March 2, 1983

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That this report be received and forwarded to City Council, and that I report next on a Part II Development Concept, as outlined in the body of this report.

Stephen G. McLaughlin
Commissioner



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No. 320/01364

RAILWAY LANDS PROPOSED RC
AND TRANSIT NETWORK

CITY OF TORONTO PLANNING AN DEVELOP
DEPARTMENT URBAN DESIGN C
KENNETH GREENBERG Architect JAN
SCALE : 1:500 Drawn by: M.J. Checked by: KG & FV. FILE

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL